

From: Gabriella DeLuca [<mailto:gabriella.deluca608@gmail.com>]
Sent: Saturday, February 15, 2020 2:24 PM
To: Tucker, Matthew <MTucker@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Opposition to TRH ordinance 180 day rule

Dear Mr. Tucker:

I am writing to express my opposition to the Tourist Rooming House (TRH) ordinance changes. Specifically, I have concerns about the 180 day / 6 month period cap in the latest draft ordinance. While I care very much about this topic and prefer to testify in person at the Plan Commission unfortunately I work evenings so my written comments will have to suffice.

I travel at least 1-2 weeks per month for work and have been able to make ends meet by renting out my home, while I'm gone, for a week or two at a time. I can earn about \$800 per week I rent it, and I do this about once a month, which totals about \$10,000 per year. While I'm not getting rich doing this, it does help me pay my property taxes and do maintenance/improvements on my home, keeping it pristine for myself and my guests.

The State of Wisconsin, as you're well aware, has a "Right to Rent" law which does allow local zoning authorities to impose a 180 day cap on short-term rentals however it does not require the 180 days to be continuous. I have no problem with the 180 day cap however I think it should be simply 180 days per calendar (or licensing) year. This would allow people like me to continue renting out my home once a month for a week at a time (which totals only 84 days per year) and still remain well below your cap. Imposing the cap on a continuous basis would dramatically impact me financially, forcing me to choose one 6-month period and leaving me vacant the other 6-month period. Who does that help?

I feel like there have been a few bad actors in Madison that these ordinance changes are directed at. Unfortunately the rest of us are being adversely impacted. While Air BB may be a large company, the local hosts are, for the most part, mom & pop operators. We are Madison locals, earning money that we are then infusing back in to our local economy. It feels like these ordinance changes are crippling our ability to do that.

The argument that the TRH are impacting affordable housing is really only one piece of a complicated puzzle and I feel the City needs to take a stronger look at their own role in this issue. Why people would turn to short-term rentals instead of long-term rentals in the first place? Property taxes are a huge factor. In response, the City doles out tax credits to large developers but there is no assistance for the mom/pop landlords, no incentive to keep their rental rates low. When property taxes rise 10% in a year those costs have to be directly passed on to tenants. How about if the City works on some innovative small-scale programs to offer tax credits to mom/pop landlords in exchange for affordable rents? This would be a much more productive way for Madison to lead the way as opposed to TRH regulations.

Finally, while there may be a few bad actors, for the most part the TRH are extremely well-kept properties. The only way to get good reviews and repeat guests is to provide exemplary service and fine accommodations. I would much prefer to live next door to a well-kept TRH than a long-term rental where students party and the landlord is absent and doing minimal maintenance. So

much effort is being directed at regulating these few TRH while many more citizens in our community are adversely affected by poorly cared for long-term rentals.

Lastly, I think residents often get cast as "NIMBYs" when they object to change or developments. However, in this case, it actually seems like the City itself is being NIMBY with the ordinance changes, completely missing all the positives TRHs offer. When many of us travel we probably enjoy renting a lake house with our family for a week or staying at an apartment near a City Center, yet we don't want to offer guests to Madison the same options we ourselves enjoy in other places. I have met wonderful people, as a host, from around the world. I feel like an ambassador of Madison, offering them tips on neighborhood parks, where to find the best coffee, and how to walk to the nearby grocery store. The City seems to completely miss this role, which many hosts take tremendous pride in, instead casting us as villains.

In conclusion, I have no problem, in general, with some level of oversight. However, I would ask you to reconsider the 180 period being continuous, as that seems to do more harm than good.

Thank you,

Gabriella DeLuca
Madison, WI.